



Teen Dating Violence Help-Seeking Intentions and Behaviors Among Ethnically and Racially Diverse Youth: A Systematic Review

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

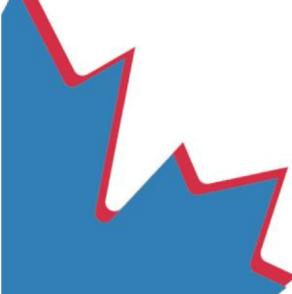
Prior research in the field has found high prevalence of teen dating violence (TDV) among racially and ethnically diverse youth. In the current study, the authors examined the state of the current research on dating violence and help-seeking intentions and behaviours among racially and ethnically diverse adolescents. Seeking and receiving help for TDV experiences has been linked to a lower risk of further violence, decreased negative outcomes for survivors, and an increase in overall wellbeing. The researchers identified youths' sources of support and barriers to help-seeking.

WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS DO?

The researchers conducted a systematic review to examine the help-seeking intentions and behaviours of youth between the ages of 12 and 19 based on racial and ethnic differences. They analyzed the methodologies and results of ten studies published in English since 2000.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- Current studies on this topic have primarily addressed differences among African American and Latino youth. Youth relied on informal sources of support, with youth from both groups preferring to seek help from parents and friends. Fear and mistrust towards formal sources of support, lack of closeness, shame and embarrassment informed youths' help-seeking intentions and behaviours.
- There is a need for more research on help-seeking intentions and behaviours among ethnically and racially diverse youth.
- The development and evaluation of interventions for diverse youth, as well as additional research examining culturally specific factors, are needed to further provide strategies for practitioners to encourage youth to seek help from both formal and informal sources.



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WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS FIND?

The literature search found few studies on this topic, indicating a need to conduct future research in this area. The studies primarily addressed help-seeking intentions and behaviours among African American and Latino youth. Youth relied on informal sources of support, with youth from both groups preferring to seek help from parents and friends. Feelings of mistrust towards sources of support, lack of closeness, and shame and embarrassment informed youth's help-seeking intentions and behaviours. The experiences and type of dating violence were also found to impact youth's help-seeking behaviour.

Racially and ethnically specific factors such as negative perceptions of father figures, acculturation (assimilation to a different culture), and notions of traditional gender roles were identified as barriers to help-seeking. Additionally, the role of social media as a TDV help-seeking strategy emerged as an interesting finding in the reviewed studies, but its role as a potentially useful tool has not been well-researched enough in order to properly assess its effectiveness.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?

Researchers and program developers can use this research to familiarize themselves with the barriers to help-seeking intentions and behaviours that should be addressed among ethnically and racially diverse youth. Future research and interventions should develop methods to encourage diverse youth to seek help from both formal and informal sources. Such work could consider addressing perceptions of help-seeking as a weakness, fear of emasculation, the fear of disclosing to a father, gender role norms, and how attitudes toward help-seeking change as a function of acculturation.

Friends and parents should also learn about TDV, how to respond to different types of violence, and where to turn for help depending on the type of TDV. Culturally appropriate interventions need to be developed to help parents communicate in a manner that would be helpful to their children and encourage their disclosure of TDV experiences. Educational, medical and legal institutions which work closely with youth who have been affected by TDV should conduct assessments to explore the reasons behind young people's reluctance to seek help, and based upon their findings train their professionals on culturally appropriate ways to reach out to youth.

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